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Chris Masters (writer)

Christopher "Chris" Wayne Masters PSM (born 4 December 1948 in Grafton, New South Wales^[1]) is a multi-Walkley Award winning and Logie Award winning Australian journalist and author.

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Life

Chris Masters was born in Grafton, New South Wales. He is the fourth son of Charles Masters and the journalist and author Olga Masters and the brother of rugby league coach and journalist Roy Masters, film maker Quentin Masters, radio broadcaster Ian Masters and media producers Sue Masters and Deb Masters.

Masters was educated at Macquarie Boys High School, Parramatta, completing his Leaving Certificate in 1965. He joined the Australian Broadcasting Corporation the following year.

He commenced working on ABC television's flagship public affairs program Four Corners in 1983 and has since become the program's longest serving reporter. His first program was the landmark "Big League", a 1983 investigation of judicial corruption, which helped bring about the Street Royal Commission.^[2]

He is a Gold Walkley Award winner, for his 1985 Four Corners report "French Connections" about the infamous sinking of the Rainbow Warrior. Another famous Four Corners report by Masters, "The Moonlight State" from 1987, led to the Fitzgerald Inquiry into corruption in Queensland.^[2]

Degrees and honours

In 2004, he was appointed Adjunct Professor in Journalism with the School of Applied Communication at [RMIT University](#) and in 2006, RMIT awarded Masters an honorary doctorate in Communications.^[3]

Masters was awarded the [Public Service Medal](#) on 14 June 1999^[4] and the [Centenary Medal](#) on 1 January 2001 for "service to Australian society in journalism".^[5]

He serves on the national board of directors of the children's cancer charity [RedKite](#)^[6]

Jonestown won the 2007 [Queensland Premier's Literary Awards](#) Literary Work Advancing Public Debate – the Harry Williams Award. It also won the 2007 [Walkley Award](#) for the best non-fiction book.

Writing

Masters has written four books. His first *Inside Story*, published in 1992, told of the stories behind some of his *Four Corners* programs. His second, *Not for Publication*, published in 2002, again dealt with his television work. His third book was called *Jonestown* and finally a book about the Australian soldier called *Uncommon Soldier*.

Jonestown

In 2002, Masters profiled radio personality [Alan Jones](#) for an episode of *Four Corners*, and then went on to write a biography titled [Jonestown: The Power and the Myth of Alan Jones](#). On 29 June 2006, [ABC Enterprises](#) decided to cancel publication of Masters' manuscript; ABC Enterprises director Robyn Watts stated that publication was being withdrawn because it would "almost certainly result in commercial loss, which would be irresponsible". This was widely believed to be a veiled reference to the fact that Jones' lawyers had threatened an expensive defamation lawsuit if the book reached publication.^[7] ABC program [Media Watch](#) reported that the decision to cancel publication had been made not by ABC Enterprises but by the ABC Board. Many ABC personalities have criticised the Board's decision, and indeed wrote a petition against it, with signatories including [Richard Glover](#) and [Phillip Adams](#).

[Mike Carlton](#), a Sydney radio broadcaster and rival to Jones, suggested on [2UE](#) during his show of 5 July 2006 that the book might detail homosexual encounters on Jones' part^[8] and Jones' lawyers had told the ABC that Masters' materials were "replete with false and inappropriate sexual innuendo".^[9] Certainly, in *Jonestown* Masters advances the theory that Jones' attempt to deny his sexuality is a defining feature of his personality, and provides an explanation for many aspects of his behaviour – including, for example, his interest in mentoring young male athletes. His explanation of much about Jones by reference to his sexuality left Masters open to charges of homophobia,^[10] which friendly commentators (in an ironic effort to defend Jones' reputation) have exploited.

The ABC's refusal to publish the book did not delay it for long; Masters had little difficulty in finding publishers willing to take it on, and [Allen & Unwin](#) released it in October 2006. Lengthy excerpts were also published in [The Sydney Morning Herald](#).^[11]

Bibliography

Incomplete – to be updated

Books

- *Inside Story*
- *Not for Publication*
- *Jonestown*
- *Uncommon Soldier*

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This page was last edited on 6 January 2018, at 02:38.

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